

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07

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AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14714

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: MORE ON ANDROPOV AND SHCHELOKOV PROMOTIONS

REF: MOSCOW 14358

1. SUMMARY. SEVERAL EXPLANATIONS FOR THE ANDROPOV AND SHCHELOKOV PROMOTIONS ARE IN CIRCULATION: ONE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT RELATES THE PROMOTIONS TO THE PARTY-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP; ANOTHER LINKS THEM WITH THE MIG-25 INCIDENT; AT LEAST ONE SOVIET THINKS THEY WERE OCCASIONED BY MAO'S DEATH. ANDROPOV'S PREVIOUS MILITARY RANK REMAINS A MYSTERY: WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON THIS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MOSCOW RUMOGUMPKE THUS FAR HAS NOT TURNED OUT MUCH ON THE  
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ANDROPOV AND SHCHELOKOV PROMOTIONS, PERHAPS BECAUSE WESTERN

JOURNALISTS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH MORE NEWSWORTHY EVENTS SUCH AS MAO'S DEATH AND THE MIG-25 AFFAIR. INDEED, THE RUMOR MILL IS GENERALLY QUIET CONCERNING THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE: WE HAVE HEARD LITTLE SPECULATION ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING SUPREME SOVIET SESSION OR ABOUT A POSSIBLE CC PLENUM, AND RUMORS OF POSSIBLE LEADERSHIP CHANGES DIED DOWN SOON AFTER THE INITIAL REPORTS OF KOSYGIN'S ILLNESS.

3. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, HEARD A NUMBER OF DIVERSE THEORIES ABOUT THE PROMOTIONS:

A -- SEVERAL SOVIET INTELLECTUALS AND DISSIDENTS ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS TOLD US THEY THOUGHT THE PROMOTIONS WERE CALCULATED TO INCREASE PARTY CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY:

-- ONE SOURCE BELIEVED THAT ANDROPOV AND SHCHELOKOV WOULD, AS GENERALS OF THE ARMY, NOW HAVE A VOICE IN THE GENERAL STAFF;

-- A DISSIDENT SOURCE CITED A SUPREME SOVIET DECREE OF OCTOBER 1973, SPECIFYING THAT THE HIGHEST RANK ONE CAN HOLD IN THE MVD IS COLONEL GENERAL, TO BOLSTER HIS ARGUMENT THAT THE PARTY PROMOTED THE MVD AND KGB CHIEFS TO HIGH ARMY RANK TO ENSURE THAT THE MILITARY WOULD BE RESTRAINED DURING TIMES OF POLITICAL CHANGE OR "TROUBLE;"

B. -- ANOTHER SCHOOL OF THOUGHT LINKS THE PROMOTIONS TO THE MIG-25 INCIDENT:

-- ONE OF OUR WESTERN DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES ADVANCED THE THEORY THAT ANDROPOV WAS PROMOTED BECAUSE IN ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE DEFECTION THE KGB WOULD HAVE TO INTERROGATE VERY HIGH RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS;

-- AN INDIAN DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE PROPOSED THAT THE PRESTIGE OF THE KGB SUFFERED A TERRIBLE BLOW BECAUSE OF THE DEFECTION, AND ANDROPOV WAS PROMOTED IN ORDER TO SIGNAL THAT THE KGB (PRESUMABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR TROOP SECURITY) WAS STILL A TRUSTED ORGANIZATION;

C. -- AND A SOVIET TRANSLATOR TOLD HIS AMERICAN NEWSMAN EMPLOYER THAT THE PROMOTIONS WERE INTENDED TO UNDERScore SOVIET INTERNAL CONFIDENTIAL

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UNITY IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF MAO'S DEATH.

4. THE DECREE REFERRED TO BY OUR DISSIDENT SOURCE IS ENTITLED "ON SPECIAL RANKS FOR LOW LEVEL AND COMMAND CADRES OF ORGANS OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS," DATED OCTOBER 23, 1973 AND PUBLISHED IN "VEDOMOSTI VERKHOVNOVO SOVETTA SSSR" NUMBER 43 FOR THAT YEAR. THE DECREE INDICATES THAT THE HIGHEST AUTHORIZED MILITIA RANK IS LIEUTENANT GENERAL, WHILE THE HIGHEST AUTHORIZED RANK FOR

"INTERNAL SERVICE" IS COLONEL GENERAL. JUDGING FROM THIS, AND FROM THE FACT THAT THE DECREES PROMOTING ANDROPOV AND SHCHELOKOV SPECIFIED "MILITARY" RANK ("VOINSKOGO ZVANIYA"), IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE TWO MEN HAVE BEEN MADE GENERALS OF THE ARMY WITHIN THE REGULAR SOVIET MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

5. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO INVOLVE A ONE-STEP ADVANCEMENT FOR SHCHELOKOV. AS INDICATED REFTEL, NEITHER OUR FILES-- NOR THOSE OF OUR BRITISH, FRENCH, OR FRG ALLIES--CONTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT ANDROPOV'S PREVIOUS MILITARY RANK.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT ON ANDROPOV'S PRIOR MILITARY STANDING.

7. COMMENT: IF, AS SEVERAL OF OUR SOVIET SOURCES HAVE SPECULATED, THE PROMOTIONS WERE INTENDED PRIMARILY TO STRENGTHEN THE PARTY'S HAND IN CONTROLLING THE MILITARY, THE TIMING OF THE PROMOTIONS BECOMES INTRIGUING. ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION WOULD BE THAT THE PARTY IS UNEASY OVER CONTINUING DISSATISFACTION WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT REGARDING THE USTINOV APPOINTMENT AND HIS SUBSEQUENT ELEVATION TO MARSHAL. ANOTHER AND PERHAPS A RELATED POSSIBILITY WOULD BE THAT THE PARTY, MINDFUL OF THE KEY ROLE PLAYED BY THE MILITARY IN PAST POLITICAL SUCCESSIONS, HAS OPTED TO STRENGTHEN ITS HAND IN ANTICIPATION OF TOP-LEVEL LEADERSHIP CHANGES.

8. THE CHANCES THAT THE PROMOTIONS WERE RELATED TO THE MIG-25 INCIDENT OR TO MAO'S DEATH SEEM REMOTE TO US. THE PROMOTIONS MAY SIGNAL PARTY CONCERN ABOUT THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT ALTHOUGH WE KNOW OF NO FIRM CORROBORATING EVIDENCE FOR THIS HYPOTHESIS. IN ANY CASE, THE NEXT CC PLENUM AND SUPREME SOVIET SESSION MAY INDICATE WHETHER SHCHELOKOV IS CONFIDENTIAL

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IN LINE FOR BIGGER THINGS, AS SUGGESTED REFTEL.  
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## Message Attributes

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